



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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SITKA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Special Meeting

Harrigan Centennial Hall

February 27, 2025 6:15 p.m.

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Chair Littlefield called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m.

Present: Roby (Koolyéik) Littlefield (Chair), Dionne (Yeidíkok'áa) Brady-Howard, James (Kushxeet) Poulson, Candace Rutledge, Nicole Fiorino, Scott Saline (Assembly Liaison; arrived at 6:49 p.m.)

Excused: Karen Lucas

Staff: Kim Davis, Ariadne Will

Public: Ashley Green, Tyler Green, Kendall Didrickson, Michael Miller, Jess Perkins, Zen Perkins, Harvey Kitka, Tom Gamble, Caroline Daws, Georgina Kitka, Willoughby Peterson, Devon Calvin, Nirali Desai, Katelyn Stiles, Roberta Bernhardt, L'duteen Jerrick Hope-Lang, Cindy Stiles, Steve Johnson

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

M/Poulson-S/Fiorino moved to approve the agenda. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

III. GUEST &/OR PERSONS TO BE HEARD

None.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Rescind the motion at the February 12 Historic Preservation Commission meeting approving the recommendation to demolish the existing structure at 203 Kaagwaantaan Street.**

The commission held little discussion after introducing the motion to rescind the motion at the February 12 meeting approving recommendation to demolish the existing structure at 203 Kaagwaantaan Street. Vice Chair Brady-Howard said she was in favor of rescinding the motion, and Commissioner Poulson said he wanted to get to a vote quickly, as many members of the public were in attendance to give comment on a motion to recommend demolition of the structure at 203 Kaagwaantaan. The motion to recommend demolition could not be brought forth until after the motion to

rescind was approved by vote by supermajority. No public comment was given regarding the motion to rescind.

Following the unanimous vote to rescind the Feb. 12 recommendation, Vice Chair Brady-Howard requested the commission add an agenda item for recommendation for demolition of the existing structure at 203 Kaagwaantaan Street.

M/Poulson-S/Brady-Howard moved to rescind the motion at the February 12 Historic Preservation Commission meeting approving the recommendation to demolish the existing structure at 203 Kaagwaantaan Street. Motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote.

M/Poulson-S/Brady-Howard moved to amend the agenda, adding under New Business, Item B: Recommend the request for demolition of an existing structure at 203 Kaagwaantaan Street. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

b. Recommend the request for demolition of an existing structure at 203 Kaagwaantaan Street.

Prior to the introduction of the motion to recommend the request for demolition and following the vote on the motion to rescind the recommendation made February 12, Chair Littlefield gave opening remarks introducing the attending commissioners and Planning staff to the public, and stating the purpose of the commission as an advisory body whose primary purpose was to educate those building in Sitka's Historic District.

In a staff report, Will explained that the purpose of the special meeting was to hear additional testimony related to the demolition request that was not heard at the February 12 meeting. Will read a large portion of the memorandum Planning Director Amy Ainslie provided to the commission, which further outlined the role of the commission, the property owner's rights, and the commission's ability to appeal the Planning Department's signing of the demolition permit, should the commission fail the motion recommending demolition.

The commission called up applicant Tyler Green, who said that the existing structure—a single-family home—had been unoccupied for about four years. He said the former resident moved out due to the house's dilapidated and inhospitable state.

Commissioner Poulson reiterated to Green the recommendations the commission provided him at the February 12 meeting. He told Green that the existing structure was significant because it could contribute to the creation of a historic district in the future. Public comment and documentation provided

in the meeting packet stated the structure as a former clan house, originally constructed in 1888. Commissioner Fiorino asked Green about the building's structural integrity. Green said no evaluation had been done but that he didn't believe it to be sound. He said the current plan for the property was to build a two-dwelling home with a garage after demolition.

The commission requested to hear from Kendall Didrickson, the property owner, who was having technical issues. The commission moved on to public comment while Didrickson worked to rejoin the meeting from another device.

In addition to the property owner, eight members of the public spoke under public comment, including the applicant's spouse. Seven spoke against the recommendation for demolition.

Jess Perkins said she had conducted research and interviews regarding the structure and property prior to the previous owner's death in early 2014. She said she believed the single-family home had had structural integrity at the time of her research, and that rehabilitating it and returning it to its earlier purpose as a clan house would be significant. Perkins noted that since the building was private property, its return to use as a clan house would have to happen voluntarily.

Willoughby Peterson spoke next and said he was concerned with the proposed sale of the property, as he believed it should be returned to clan ownership and restored. He asked the commission to investigate the sale of the property.

Kendall Didrickson, upon resolving technical issues, said that the house had been unoccupied since 2018 and that the electricity had been turned off in 2019. He said that since 2019, pipes had burst and the building had sustained extensive water damage, in addition to preexisting fire damage.

Didrickson said he had helped with an extensive renovation of the structure in the 1990s and received title to the house because of his work. He said that he had come to see the house as a financial and legal liability due to its condition and wanted to sell to a longtime friend, applicant Tyler Green. Didrickson said he was aware of the building's history as a clan house.

Jerrick Hope-Lang—who was a member of the Point House, another Kiks.ádi house—mentioned his efforts to restore the Point House and said he and others wanted to purchase the property from Didrickson.

Katelyn Stiles, a member of Kaḡátjaa Hít and a descendant of Didrickson's paternal grandmother, explained the cultural significance of the house and described it as a place that held the family's ancestors. She asked the commission to vote against the recommendation to demolish the structure.

Following Stiles's comment, Vice Chair Brady-Howard said that in the future, the commission would work to ensure it had adequate resources and information when considering recommendation requests related to clan houses.

Tom Gamble spoke next under public comment and requested the commission postpone its decision and change Sitka General Code to better protect culturally significant properties. He said that the applicant's characterization of the structure as dilapidated was relative, and that the property could be rehabilitated, citing the Russian Bishop's House as an example of a property that was once in disrepair.

Harvey Kitka said he had ties to many families within the village and said he had more to share about the area's history at a later date.

Mike Miller, who grew up in a different clan house on Katlian Street, said clan houses were significant as community spaces.

Ashley Green, the applicant's spouse, said she hadn't been aware of the history of the structure prior to the February 12 meeting. She said she and her husband planned to build a new structure that fit, architecturally, with the neighborhood's character.

Following public comments noted a difference between a house fitting the architectural style of an area and fitting the cultural characteristics of a clan house.

Under commission discussion, Vice Chair Brady-Howard reiterated remarks made during public comment and said she would vote against recommending demolition.

Following the vote denying recommendation of the demolition, Didrickson said he would not sell the property to members of Ka̋x̋átj̋aa Hít.

M/Brady-Howard-S/Rutledge moved to approve the recommendation for demolition of the single-family dwelling at 203 Kaagwaantaan Street. Motion failed 0-5 by roll call vote.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Littlefield adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.